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*Fields, Factories and Workshops.* By P. KRAPOTKIN. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1899. — 315 pp.

Prince Krapotkin has hitherto been known to economists primarily through his militant activity in behalf of international anarchism. His essays in English reviews during the past two decades have, however, disclosed an intimate acquaintance with some of the sociological problems of early society. To geologists and geographers, also, his name has long been familiar because of his admirable work on the glacial epoch and on Siberian geography. Finally, he has laid the wider literary public under obligation by the series of masterly autobiographical sketches which are now appearing in one of the American monthlies. The present work, however, is the first in which he addresses himself specifically to students of economics.

In this book there are three fundamental ideas. The first is what the author calls the "decentralization of industries." He points out that the era of monopoly by any one country has gone by, never to return. It is immaterial whether the monopoly consists of exclusive technical knowledge, of industrial skill or of commercial supremacy. Science has become international: the improvements effected in one country are soon transplanted to another. About the only advantages that are left are climatic; and even these can be largely overcome by human action. The consequence is that, within a measurable future, every country will traverse the agricultural stage and reach the industrial stage. Just as England is losing its commercial supremacy, owing to the competition of Germany and the United States, so also Russia and other European countries are making rapid advances; and even Japan and India, the former markets for the surplus industrial products of England, have just started on their rapid march. Before long China will wake up, Africa will develop independently, and the South American states will go through the same evolution as the United States. The result will be that every country will become its own producer of manufactured goods, and will have to rely largely upon its own home consumers.

The next series of chapters is devoted to a consideration of the possibilities of agriculture. Here we have a mass of facts and figures to show the development of intensive culture. The author is well informed as to the recent applications of science to agronomy, and points out how most countries have only begun to scratch the surface. The real problem is not so much chemical as biological; and in an interesting series of examples Prince Krapotkin shows how the most

fertile soil can actually be created on a bed of rock or asphalt. His illustrations, some of which have already seen the light in magazine articles, are drawn largely from the achievements of market gardening in France and Belgium, although he has a good knowledge of recent experiments in other parts of the world, including America. He points out the results of the experiments made with "pedigree cereals," showing that one grain of wheat has, in certain cases, yielded crops of from 500 to 2500 grains; and that, in another case, a single grain of barley has produced a stock with 110 stems, giving from 5000 to 6000 single grains. He also calls attention to the recent application of the idea of sowing beneficent microbes which rapidly develop in the soil and fertilize it. So easy has it become for a farmer to create and increase his own soil that it is now a usual stipulation in certain renting contracts that the gardener may carry his soil along with him when he quits his tenancy. It may be incidentally remarked that this new conception of "portable soil" may bring about some alteration in our legal ideas. The conclusion drawn by the author from all these marvellous experiments is that the dangers of the over-population theory are even more remote than have usually been confessed. It is precisely in the most densely populated parts of the world that agriculture has recently made the most prodigious strides: indeed, the high development of industry and agriculture not only go hand in hand, but are really inseparable.

The third and final series of chapters deals with the subject of small industries or petty trades. It has become a firmly rooted conviction with many economists that all such trades are a survival of the old domestic system of industry which is fast being supplanted by the factory system. Prince Krapotkin, while not denying that this is true in many cases and that whole branches of industry can really be made productive only through the application of the factory system, points out that there is another side of the question. He looks forward to the possibility of carrying on industrial works in the villages themselves, largely in connection with agriculture, and partly as a by-product of the farmers. He does not deny that the machine has everywhere superseded hand work; but he thinks that the hydraulic, and especially the electrical, distribution of power largely nullifies the arguments of those who maintain that the industry of the future must be factory industry in the large towns. His ideal, therefore, is the coming together of the field and the workshop, each contributing to the welfare of the other, and both together rendering possible a prodigious increase in human welfare. In the last chapter, dealing

with "Brain Work and Manual Work," the present divorce between science and handcraft is discussed, and the advantages which science can derive from a combination of the two are eloquently set forth.

Prince Krapotkin's work is undeniably interesting. Its strength consists in a clear and readable presentation of facts, a suggestive peering into the future and an all-pervasive humane spirit. Of the three points which he emphasizes, one is comparatively new—namely, the future dependence of each country upon its own home consumers. This sounds like the old doctrine of Carey and his predecessors; but it is in reality very different. The chief defect in the argument, however, is the failure to point out the future of international trade. If every nation is to create everything that it consumes, raw materials as well as manufactured products, international commerce will come to an end, and with it the very dissemination of international knowledge which forms the basis of his entire argument. The second point, as to the possibilities of agriculture, will doubtless be fresh and suggestive to many readers, although the work of our own American statistician, Mr. J. R. Dodge, hints at very much the same results. The third point—the future of the petty trades—has already been discussed incidentally by Marshall and other economists. But in both these portions of the work the setting of the argument is entirely new, and the results are remarkably suggestive.

As a consequence, the work would undoubtedly be hailed by economists as a decided contribution to the subject, were it not for the fact that the author cannot refrain from importing into the exposition his familiar anarchistic ideas. These take the shape of continual allusions to the absurdity of our modern industrial methods and to the principle of associative communism as the only solution of the problem, from both the agricultural and the industrial point of view. It must be admitted, however, that these passages can be eliminated without impairing the value of the remainder; and in its purely economic portions the book deserves serious consideration.

EDWIN R. A. SELIGMAN.

*The Truth about Agricultural Depression: An Economic Study of the Evidence of the Royal Commission.* By FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, M. P. London, New York and Bombay, Longmans, Green & Co., 1898. — xvi, 388 pp.

A feature of the final report of the royal commission on agricultural depression in Great Britain, made public in the summer of 1897, was the voluminous dissenting report of a single member of the